

Mr. Watterson on Christianity

News report in Louisville Courier-Journal: Mr. Watterson's address was entitled "Christianity Versus Theology." He spoke as follows:

"The groves were God's first temples," the poet reminds us as he sings his Forest Hymn to the gentle rhythm made by the twitter of birds and the rustle of leaves, "the groves were God's first temples."

I am not sure that the exaltation we feel in the completion and consecration of this noble edifice is wholly responsive to the spirit of God that before all else must envelope and permeate the religion and the life we call Christian. There are those who think that crude simplicity alone befits a sanctuary. The amplitude and the stateliness here may mark an unconscious dissonance between our state of being and our confession of faith; between our professed humility and our love of display; for they seem somewhat at odds with the lowly attributes of the Nazarene we adore and the apostles whose light shines still upon us from the stormy banks of Jordan and the far away shores of the Sea of Galilee.

"They didn't know everything down in Judee," another famous but impious poet tells us; and since twenty intervening centuries have set the pace for lordly dome and cathedral spire, for the pageantry, the pomp, pride and circumstances of the church, both militant and holy, it is not for a poor layman, like me, to venture an opinion, or to utter a discordant note.

In my personal experience of many lands I have not found that the grandeur and beauty wrought by the hand of man have obscured from me the radiance of the Christ, or the glory of the heavens. I have not found that storied urn, or animated bust has ever diverted my attention from the wondrous tale of the fishermen, or that piles of marbles and alabaster encircling the altar, instead of the earlier archways of nature above it, have come between me and the worship of God. Whatever we behold around us and about us, that alone which makes us good men and women is essential; the grace of God; of God in everything, but most of all, of God within ourselves; God in our eyes, God in our mind, God in our hearts; and, whether this comes to us as pealing anthem swells the note of praise, or is brought by the chant of the choir invisible from the tree-tops and the skies, aroused within me the only devil I have ever personally known.

My reading of late years has embraced not a few works which seek, or which affect, to deal with the mystery of life and death. In my mind they leave a mystery still. For all their learning and research—their positivity and contradiction—none of the writers know more than I think I know myself and all that I think I know myself may be abridged to the simple rescript, I know nothing. The wisest of us reckon not whence we came, or whither we go; the human mind is unable to conceive the eternal in either direction; the soul of man being inscrutable even to himself.

"The night has a thousand eyes,
The day but one,
Yet the life of the bright world dies,
With the dying sun;
The mind has a thousand eyes,
The heart but one,
Yet the light of a whole life dies,
When the day is done."

All that there is to religion therefore is faith; all that there is to the church, the spirit of God shining upon us, through belief in Christ our Lord. There is nothing else. They tell us the church is losing its hold upon men. If that be true it is because

either it gives itself over to theology—the pride of opinion—or yields itself to the celebration of the mammon of unrighteousness.

I do not believe that it is the truth. Never in the history of the world was Jesus of Nazareth so interesting and predominant as at this moment. Between Buddha, teaching the blessing of eternal sleep, and Christ, teaching the blessing of eternal life, mankind has been long divided, but slowly, surely the influence of the Christ has overtaken that of the Buddha until that portion of the world which has advanced most by process of evolution from the primal state of man to the miracles of modern discovery and invention, now worships at the shrine of Christ and Him arisen from the dead, not at the sign of Buddha and total oblivion.

A little while ago, in response to some remarks of mine touching my wonder that the Jewish people should continue to reject the single immortal Jew of the ages, a good rabbi in this city sent me an elaborate protest in which he undertook not, indeed, to revile Jesus of Nazareth, but to enumerate and emphasize the crimes of the church we call Christian. His communication was wholly controversial. It was not delivered, I thought, with the very best grace. But I could not gainsay its indictment of Christianity as history records it, and I printed the Hebrew screed without comment, or reply.

The blessed birthright from God, the glory of heaven, the teaching and example of the Prince of Peace, have been engulfed beneath oceans of ignorance and superstition through two thousand years of embittered controversy. During the dark ages coming down even to our own time, the very light of truth was shut out from the eyes and hearts and minds of men. The blood of the martyrs we were assured in those early days was the seed of the church. The blood of the martyrs was the blood of man—weak, cruel, fallible man—who, whether he got his inspiration from the Tiber, or the Rhine, from Geneva, from Edinburgh, or from Rome, did equally the devil's work in God's name. None of the vice-regents of heaven, as they claimed to be, knew much or seemed to care much about the word of the gentle one of Bethlehem, whom they had adopted as their titular divinity, much as men in commerce adopt a trade mark. It was knock-down and drag-out theology—the ruthless machinery of organized churchism—the rank materialism of things temporal—not the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the Christian religion, which so long filled the world with crime and tears. I might have made that answer to my friend the rabbi.

I might have said to him, "What matters it whether Jesus was of divine or human parentage—a human being or an immortal spirit—he was a Jew; a glorious, unoffending Jew, done to death by a mob of hoodlums in Jerusalem; why should not you and I call Him Master and kneel together in love and pity at his feet?"

"I believe in God, the Father, Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ, his only son, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell, the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

"That is my faith. It is my religion. It is my cradle song. It may not be—nay, it is not—your cradle

song, nor your faith, nor your religion. What boots it? Can you discover another in word and deed, in luminous, far-reaching power of speech and example, to walk by the side of this the anointed one of your race and of my belief?"

"As the Irish priest said to the British prelate touching the doctrine of purgatory: 'You may go further and fare worse, my lord,' so may I say to you—though the stars in their courses lied to the wise men of the desert, the bloody history of your Judea, altogether equal in atrocity to the bloody history of Christendom, has yet to fulfill the promise of a Messiah—and, were it not well for those who proclaim themselves God's people to pause and ask themselves, 'Has He not arisen already?'"

The world is at this very moment appalled by what is happening among the Confucians in China and the Christians and Mohamedans in Africa. The crusades—forms of collective insanity—were not half so barbarous and relentless. What shall, what may, the church do?

But what church? In Rome there is war between the Quirinal and the Vatican, the government of Italy and the papal hierarchy. In France the government of the republic and the church of Rome are at daggers-drawn. England and Germany—each claiming to be Protestant—look on askance, irresolute, not as to which side may be right and which wrong, but on which side "is my bread to be buttered." In America, where it was said by the witty Frenchman we have fifty religions and only one soup, there are people who think we should begin to organize to stop the threatened coming of the pope, and such like! "Oh, liberty," cried Madame Roland, "how many crimes are committed in thy name!" Oh, churchism, may I not say, how much nonsense is trolled off in thy name!

I would think twice before trusting the wisest and best of men with absolute power; but I would trust never any body of men—never any sanhedrim, consistory, church congress, or party convention—with absolute power. Honest men are often led to do, or to assent, in association, to what they would disdain upon their conscience and responsibility as individuals. En masse extremism always prevails and extremism is always wrong, it is the more wrong and the more dangerous because it is rarely wanting for genial and convincing argument to plausible sophistries, furnishing congenial and convincing argument to the mind of the unthinking for whatever it has to propose. It is not for me to instruct Dr. Powell in his duty. It is not for me to plan a campaign for this exceedingly well-housed religious institution. But, I would never have ventured to come here if I had not believed that the whole force of its organization—the genius of its pastor, the influence of its wealth and culture—were to be heaven-bent toward the love of man through grace of God. If that be wanting nothing else is much worth while. Not alone the love of man for woman, but the love of woman for man and of man for man; the divine friendship taught us by the sermon on the mount; the religion of giving not of getting; of whole-hearted giving; of joy in the love and the joy of others.

"Who giveth himself with his gift feeds three,
Himself, his hungry neighbor and Me."

I would have Dr. Powell, and all other ministers of religion, as free to discuss the things of this world as the statesman and the journalist; but, with this difference, that the objective point with them shall be the regeneration of man through

MAKE \$21.00 NEXT SATURDAY



Easy Money—Waiting for YOU. Be quick, write today. Sell the **MARVEL VAPORIZER** for Coal Oil Lamps and Lanterns. Startling new invention, just out. Makes Common Lamp a Vapor Lamp. Cuts oil bills in two. No need to break. Refills, white light. Low in price—made like wildfire—2 to 4 in every house. Listen! Ashorn, Utah, says, "quickest, easiest seller I ever saw." Kretzer, Mo., cleared \$91 one week. Exciting business—easy, profitable work. Halbsam, Wis., made \$18 first day. Any one can make this money, so hurry, HURRY. You can average

\$42.00 A WEEK

Men or women, this is your opportunity. **EXPERIENCE IS UNNECESSARY**, work all or spare time. Make big money—be independent. Not for sale in stores. We give you protection and territory **FREE**. Send no money, but write quick for information. **DO IT NOW** before it's too late. Sidney Fairchild Co. 392 Fairchild Bldg, Toledo, O.

AGENTS! BIG PROFITS



The only Strop that strops any razor diagonally. Brandt's patented automatic Razor Stropper. Automatically puts a perfect edge on any razor. Old style or safety. Big seller. Every man wants one. Write quick for terms, prices, territory.

A. W. Brandt Cutlery Co., 84 W. Broadway, N. Y.

Mr. Homeseeker

Learn about the fertile farm lands of Montana, the best of the new countries, where your best chance is and your last chance to secure good land free as a homestead or cheap by purchase. Send name and address to J. H. Hall, State Commissioner of Agriculture, Helena, Montana.

WANTED High-Class Salesmen

In every town to sell Florida Land. I pay \$50.00 on every sale. Easy to sell on my liberal terms of \$5.00 down and \$5.00 a month. Send for "Confidential Circular to General Agents" and "Selling Manual." BOTH FREE. E. C. HOWE, 766 Hartford Building, Chicago, Ill.

ECZEMA

CAN BE CURED. My mild, soothing, guaranteed cure does it and FREE SAMPLE: rovesit. STOPS THE ITCHING and cures to stay. WRITE NOW—TODAY. Dr. CANNADAY, 174 Park Square, Sedalia, Mo.

FENCE STRONGEST MADE. Farm Poultry and Lawn. 36-inch Hog Fence 15c. 47-inch Farm Fence 23 1/2c. Catalogue free. COILED SPRING FENCE CO., Box 234, Winchester, Indiana.

WRITE Glendale, Ariz., Board of Salt River Valley. Quarter million acres, alfalfa, citrus fruits. Finest soil, water and climate. Ideal farm location.

Asthma REMEDY sent on FREE TRIAL. If it cures send \$1.00; if not, don't. Give Express Office, Hall Chemical Company, 519 Ohio Ave., Sidney, O.

NEW RUPTURE CURE

Don't Wear A Truss.

Brooks' Appliance. New discovery. Wonderful. No obnoxious springs or pads. Automatic Air Cushions. Bands and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No knives. No lymphok. No lies. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial. Pat. Sept. 10, 1901.

CATALOGUE FREE. C. E. BROOKS, 173 STATE STREET, Marshall, Mich.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED in each town to ride and exhibit sample 1912 Bicycle. Write for special offer. We ship on Approval without cent deposit, allow 10 DAYS FREE TRIAL and prepay freight on every bicycle. **FACTORY PRICES** on bicycles, tires and sundries. Do not buy until you receive our catalog and learn our unheard of prices and marvelous special offers. Tires, counter tanks, new wheels, lamps, sundries, half price. **MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. C177 Chicago, Ill.**